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JIF = 1.500	SJIF (Morocco) = 5.667	OAJI (USA) = 0.350

SOI: [1.1/TAS](#) DOI: [10.15863/TAS](#)

International Scientific Journal Theoretical & Applied Science

p-ISSN: 2308-4944 (print) e-ISSN: 2409-0085 (online)

Year: 2019 Issue: 04 Volume: 72

Published: 21.04.2019 <http://T-Science.org>

QR – Issue



QR – Article



Nazokat Tairovna Rakhmanova

English teacher of Foreign languages department
International Islamic academy of Uzbekistan

SECTION 29. Literature. Folklore. Translation
Studies.

THE ROLE OF TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE IN TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Abstract: The article discusses the importance of teaching English today, as well as the methods used in teaching English, their history and advantages are noted. The structure of the methods of the English language is analyzed, recommendations and suggestions are given on the application of several methods.

Key words: Globalization, teaching English language, primary education, language teaching methods, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

Language: English

Citation: Rakhmanova, N. T. (2019). The role of total physical response in teaching English language. *ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science*, 04 (72), 268-271.

Soi: <http://s-o-i.org/1.1/TAS-04-72-29> **Doi:**  <https://dx.doi.org/10.15863/TAS.2019.04.72.29>

Introduction

English plays an important role in globalization era. It is widely used as a means of communication among people around the world. For example: the use of English as a means of communications among all the nations. Uzbekistan has taken step to introduce English as a subject in the school curriculum in the primary years. Several arguments supporting the importance of English for Elementary School students are:

- 1) speaking English in Uzbekistan is required for the demands of tourism industries;
- 2) nowadays, the result of final examinations in many schools is unsatisfactory;
- 3) some educators believe that the earlier the children learn a foreign language, the more opportunity they will acquire a high proficiency in the target language;
- 4) the Uzbekistan has automatically prepared the human resources for the future;

There are many methods in teaching languages and one of them is Total Physical Response (TPR). To be fitted with the students' age, this method seems to be appropriate to teach vocabulary since children seem like playing and moving all the time. As they are interested in body movement, vocabulary actually can be taught through action. Basically, first vocabularies for children are easy to be conveyed in action. Take it for granted, all of students are willing to do some actions in the classroom together with their friends.

Therefore, the researcher would apply Total Physical Response as a method in teaching vocabulary in class. Total Physical Response is a language teaching method built around the coordination of speech and action. It attempts to teach language through physical (motor) activity. TPR makes learning become enjoyable and less stressful.

Materials and Methods

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching method developed by Dr. James Asher, a professor of psychology, in the early sixties. Since that time, it has become one of the most effective teaching methods used by teachers all over the world. Its usefulness is given by natural coordination of speech and action that is presented by the body language. Asher explains his theory on the natural way that an infant acquires language first through listening as the baby is not able to speak when it's born. It learns to speak when listening and watching people around. For example, the mother of the infant would say: "Look at mummy. Look at mummy." The infant's face turns to the direction of the voice and mother would exclaim, "He's looking at me!" This is what Dr. Asher calls body language conversation because the infant reacts with a physical response such as looking, smiling, turning, crying and so on to parents speaking [1].

When the child understands the language, it begins speaking spontaneously. This takes some time and when it happens the child at first doesn't speak

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correctly and parents do not tend to correct him either. It comes naturally that when the child grows and observes people it understands more and begin speaking more properly. Asher thinks that during this period of listening, the student like the infant may be making a mental "program" of the language that will make it possible to produce spoken language later and he suggests being tolerant for student's speech errors at the beginning and narrow the tolerance as language skills progress.

Not only Asher but also other psychologists have similar views as him. For example, the psychologist Arthur Jensen suggests a model describing the development of verbal learning in children. The first stage of his model he calls Sv-R type learning, which another psychologist John De Cecco interprets as follows: In Jensen's notation, Sv refers to a verbal stimulus—a syllable, a word, a phrase, and so on. Refers to the physical movements the child makes in response to the verbal stimulus (or Sv) [2]. The movement may involve touching, grasping, or otherwise manipulating some object. For example, mother may tell Percival (age 1) to get the ball, and Percival, distinguishing the sound "ball" from the clatter of other household noises, responds by fetching the ball and bringing it to his mother. Ball is the Sv De Cecco, J.P. *The Psychology of Learning and Instruction: Educational Psychology*. Prentice-Hall, (verbal stimulus), and Percival's action is the response. At Percival's age, children respond to words about four times faster than they respond to other sounds in their environment. It is not clear why this is so, but it is possible that the reinforcing effects of making proper responses to verbal stimuli are sufficiently strong to cause a rapid development of this behavior. Sv-R learning represents, then, the simplest form of verbal behavior.

The main roles of learners in TPR are listening and performing. Learners should listen carefully and then react physically to commands given by the teacher. Combination of listening and physical reaction would cause comprehension and with it relating long term recall. Learners can react either individually or as a group. Content of learning is given by the teacher who gives either familiar command such as: "Stand up" and "Sit down" or unfamiliar commands: "Stand on the chair" or "Sit on the table" Students are taught to understand both kinds of commands and create their own ones. It is important not to force learners into speaking but let them speak when they feel ready otherwise, they may feel embarrassed and lose interest in language learning.

In a developmental sense, Asher sees successful adult second language learning as a parallel process to child first language acquisition. He claims that speech directed to young children consists primarily of commands, which children respond to physically before they begin to produce verbal responses. Asher

feels adults should recapitulate the processes by which children acquire their mother tongue [3].

Asher's emphasis on developing comprehension skills before the learner is taught to speak links him to a movement in foreign language teaching sometimes referred to as the Comprehension Approach. This refers to several different comprehension-based language teaching proposals, which share the belief that:

- comprehension abilities precede productive skills in learning a language;
- the teaching of speaking should be delayed until comprehension skills are established;
- skills acquired through listening transfer to other skills;
- teaching should emphasize meaning rather than form;
- teaching should minimize learner stress;

The emphasis on comprehension and the use of physical actions to teach a foreign language at an introductory level has a long tradition in language teaching.

According to Asher what I understand, TPR is based on the premise that the human brain has a biological program for acquiring any natural language on earth - including the sign language of the deaf. The process is visible when we observe how infants internalize their first language. It looks to the way that children learn their native language. Communication between parents and their children combines both verbal and physical aspects. The child responds physically to the speech of their parent. The responses of the child are in turn positively reinforced by the speech of the parents. For many months the child absorbs the language without being able to speak. It is during this period that the internalization and code breaking occurs. After this stage the child is able to reproduce the language spontaneously. With TPR the language teacher tries to mimic this process in class. In conclusion, TPR has been developed based on the process of acquiring language of children. They start to acquire language by listening and are going to be able to respond physically, uttering the words or sentences that are often repeated. Further, they perhaps will be able to read or even write a particular words or sentences that are always shown to them through picture or modeling.

TPR is a form of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, which was developed in the 1980's, proposing that learners learn a target language best when using it for meaningful communication, while grammar explanations are not needed. Although TPR can enable learners to reach high proficiency levels and to build up considerable knowledge, its potential is limited when it comes to developing speaking skills. Still, this method is widely used in teaching beginners and is quite effective when teaching children: the complexity of the input is gradually increased, children are involved in listening,

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responding to commands, and doing actions with a song or a story, and after some time they take over from the teacher and give commands themselves. Total Physical Response or TPR is a language teaching theory that has gained a significant fame during the last two decades. In order to define it, point out that “TPR is a language teaching theory built around the coordination of speech and action; it attempts to teach language through physical activity.” That is to say that it is a teaching theory whereby a learner responds to the verbal input of the teacher with body motions. So, in TPR, instructors give commands to students in the target language, and students are meant to respond with body movements and actions [4].

This theory is based on several principles. First, before starting to perform actions, students have to understand first the spoken language of their teacher. This is why TPR emphasizes the importance of listening more than speaking, especially in the early stages of learning. Second, students are meant to learn grammar and new vocabulary items through action. This is why imperatives are the main structures to communicate with students. In this way, grammar is not taught explicitly, but rather implicitly and students are expected to acquire the target language subconsciously. Third, teachers have to avoid over-correction and correct very little and not interrupt to correct mistakes. Otherwise, learners will be inhibited and won't be encouraged to learn.

In Total Physical Response, students and teachers play different roles. On the one hand, students play the role of listeners in the sense that they listen attentively to the verbal input of their teachers. They also act as performers since they respond physically to commands given by the teacher both individually and collectively. Therefore, learners have little influence over the content of learning; they are not encouraged to speak or to contribute in the lessons especially in the first stages of learning.

However, on the other hand, teachers play an active and direct role. In fact, the teacher is the one who determines the content of lessons, he or she directs classroom interaction as well as turn taking, and above all the teacher has the responsibility to provide the best kind of exposure to language. The teacher also is also presents new materials like realia, pictures flashcards, videos, and several activities. Last but not least, concerning feedback, the teacher is meant to follow the example of parents and provide students with a parent-like feedback, as we said earlier, through avoiding over-correction.

Total Physical Response has many benefits on the part of the learner. One of them is being characterized by simplicity since the verb forms used for commands are in simple form. Another one is long-term retention; the constant repetition makes language memorable and makes students remember almost everything they learn. Besides, TPR decreases

stress and makes EFL learners come across relaxed and pleasing experiences. It also increases students' motivation during lessons thanks to its high rate of success. More than that, TPR makes learners interested in learning English as a foreign language as it is funny and students enjoy it and it makes them full of energy and enthusiasm. This is besides the fact that it takes into account two learning styles: the auditory and the kinesthetic Learning.

This theory also has many benefits on the part of the teacher. In this respect, simple TPR activities do not require neither a great deal of preparation, nor expensive or demanding materials. It also does not need translation or L1 support. So, as long as the teacher is competent, just an easy rehearsal beforehand can help. Concerning the formative assessment of students, teachers will know immediately whether or not students understood what was taught. This can be done simply by observing their students' actions. Not only that, but teachers also report enjoying TPR activities as much as their students.

Although the use of TPR in the classroom has often been effective, it still has many disadvantages as well. This theory is, first of all, time consuming. For instance, learning a single vocabulary item would require the instructions of the teacher, the students' demonstration, and the teacher's feedback. So, involving the whole class can waste a lot of time. It is also limited in terms of scope because teachers can't teach everything with it, they can only employ it to teach vocabulary and grammar, especially imperatives whereas students need to make a smooth transition to all other language skills. Moreover, it is not applicable for all class sizes: TPR works best with about 8 students. With more than 10 students, there will be too much noise, chaos and unfocused time.

TPR has also been criticized for focusing only on receptive skills, mainly listening, at the expense of productive skills. That is to say, the learner is not expected to expand any efforts or to express their own thoughts in a creative way. This is besides the fact that it is more useful with children, otherwise, preparation becomes an issue for teachers at higher levels. Above all, from the psychological point of view, TPR activities might be embarrassing for shy students to whom it might be challenging to perform actions for the whole class.

Conclusion

In teaching English activities, there were three phases in the English teaching and learning process. They are pre-teaching, whilst-teaching, and post-teaching. Each of them has different activities. It depends on a certain topic that discussed by the teacher. In teaching English, the teacher also combined TPR (Total Physical Response) method with the English song in order to make the students interest to joint with the English teaching process in

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the classroom. So, they were not boring and lazy to learn it. In the first observation, the students more motivate and to join with English teaching process in the classroom at the whilst-teaching. While the second observation, it appeared at the whilst-teaching and post-teaching. In this case, generally, most students were interest, happy when they joined with the English teaching and learning process because they could practice it directly in the classroom.

TPR also uses techniques that allow students to switch back and forth between the right brain and left-brain thinking, which not many traditional teaching techniques allow. While the left brain responds to watching and learning including input such as: analyzing, critiquing, explaining, talking and telling,

the right brain response to motor-movement such as: acting, drawing, games, gesturing, metaphor and physical movement. Another thing about TPR I wanted to point out and which can be also found in my work is the fun, active and low-stress approach to teaching language. Learners are highly motivated by TPR because of the continual and fast-moving action, the high rate of success, and the low level of stress involved.

I believe teachers would be enjoying TPR as much as their students but they should remember that in the beginning, there should be some tolerance for students' speech errors and as TPR progresses, the tolerance for speech errors should narrow.

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